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PROPHETIC VOICES ABOUT AMERICA : A MONOGRAPH.

[From the Atlantic Monthly for September, 1867.]

THE discovery of America by Christopher Columbus is the greatest event of all secular history. Besides the potato, the turkey, and maize, which it introduced at once for the nourishment and comfort of the Old World, this discovery opened the door to influences infinite in extent and beneficence. Measure them, describe them, picture them, you cannot. While this continent was unknown, imagination invested it with proverbial magnificence. It was the Orient. When afterwards it took its place in geography, imagination found another field in trying to portray its future history. If the Golden Age is before, and not behind, as is now happily the prevailing faith, then indeed must America share at least, if it does not monopolize, the promised good.

Before the voyage of Columbus in 1492, nothing of America was really known. A few scraps from antiquity, a few rumors from the ocean, and a few speculations from science, were all that the inspired navigator found to guide him. Foremost among all these were the well-known verses of the Spaniard Seneca, in the chorus of his "Medea," which for generations had been the finger-point to an undiscovered world.

"Venient annis sæcula seris
Quibus Oceanus vincula rerum
Laxet, et ingens pateat tellus,
Tethysque novos detegat orbes;
Nec sit terris ultima Thule." *

"In tardy years the epoch will come in which the ocean will unloose the bonds of nature, and the great earth will stretch out, and the sea will disclose new worlds; nor will Thule be the most remote on the globe."

Two, if not more, different copies of these verses are extant in the handwriting of Columbus. — precious autographs; one in the sketch of his work on the Prophecies, another in a letter addressed to Queen Isabella; and it

would seem as if there was still a third entered among his observations of lunar eclipses at Hayti and Jamaica. By these verses the great discoverer sailed. But Humboldt, who has illustrated the enterprise with all that classical or mediæval literature affords,* does not hesitate to declare his conviction, that the discovery of a new continent was more completely foreshadowed in the simple geographical statement of the Greek Strabo, who, after a long life of travel, sat down in the eighty-fourth year of his age, during the reign of Augustus, to write the geography of the world, including its cosmography. In this work, where are gathered the results of ancient study and experience, the venerable author, after alluding to the possibility of passing direct from Spain to India, and explaining that the inhabited world is that which we inhabit and know, thus lifts the curtain: "There may be in the same temperate zone *two and indeed more inhabited lands*, especially nearest the parallel of Thinxæ or Athens, prolonged into the Atlantic Ocean." † This was the voice of ancient science.

Before the voyage of Columbus, Pulci, the Italian poet, in his *Morgante Maggiore*, sometimes called the last of the romances and the earliest of the Italian epics, reveals an undiscovered world beyond the Pillars of Hercules.

"Know that this theory is false; his bark
The daring mariner shall urge far o'er
The western wave, a smooth and level plain,
Albeit the earth is fashioned like a wheel.
Man was in ancient days of grosser mould,
And Hercules might blush to learn how far
Beyond the limits he had vainly set
The dullest sea-boat soon shall wing her way.

"Men shall descry another hemisphere,
Since to one common centre all things tend;
So earth, by curious mystery divine
Well balanced, hangs amid the starry spheres.
At our Antipodes are cities, states,
And thronged empires, ne'er divined of yore.

* Humboldt, *Examen critique de la Géographie*, Tome I. pp. 101, 162. See also Humboldt, *Kosmos*, Vol. II. pp. 516, 556, 557, 645.

† Strabo, Lib. I. p. 65; Lib. II. p. 118.

* Seneca, *Medea*, Act II. v. 371.

But see, the sun speeds on his western path
To glad the nations with expected light." *

This translation is by our own eminent historian, Prescott, who first called attention to this testimony,† which is not mentioned even by Humboldt. Leigh Hunt referred to it at a later day.‡ Pulci was born in Florence, 1431, and died there, 1487, five years before Columbus sailed, so that he was not aided by any rumor of the discovery which he so distinctly predicts.

Passing from the discovery, it may not be uninteresting to collect some of the prophetic voices about the future of America, the "All-Hail Hereafter" of our continent. They will have a lesson also. Seeing what has been already fulfilled, we may better judge what to expect. I shall set them forth in the order of time, prefacing each prediction with an account of the author sufficient to explain its origin and character. If some are already familiar, others are little known. Brought together into one body, on the principle of our national Union, *E pluribus unum*, they must give new confidence in the destinies of the Republic.

Of course I shall embrace only what has been said seriously by those whose words are important; not an oracular response, which may receive a double interpretation, like the deceptive replies to Croesus and to Pyrrhus; and not a saying, such as is described by Sir Thomas Browne when he remarks, in his "Christian Morals," that "many positions seem quodlibetically constituted, and, like a Delphian blade, will cut both ways." § Men who have lived much and felt strongly see further than others. Their vision penetrates the future. Second sight is little more than clearness of sight. Milton tells us,

"That old experience does attain
To something like prophetic strain."

Sometimes this strain is attained even in youth.

* Pulci, *Morgante Maggiore*, Canto XXV. st. 229, 230.

† Prescott, Ferdinand and Isabella, Vol. II. pp. 117, 118.

‡ Leigh Hunt, *Stories from the Italian Poets*, p. 171.

§ Browne, Works, Pickering's edition, Vol. IV. p. 81.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE. — 1682.

DR. JOHNSON called attention to a tract of Sir Thomas Browne entitled, "A Prophecy concerning the Future State of Several Nations," where the famous author "plainly discovers his expectation to be the same with that entertained later with more confidence by Dr. Berkeley, *that America will be the seat of the fifth empire*." * The tract is vague, but prophetic.

Sir Thomas Browne was born 19th October, 1605, and died 19th October, 1682. His tract was published, two years after his death, in a collection of Miscellanies, edited by Dr. Tenison. As a much-admired author, some of whose writings belong to our English classics, his prophetic prolusions are not unworthy of notice. They are founded on verses entitled "The Prophecy," purporting to have been sent to him by a friend. Among these are the following: —

"When New England shall trouble New Spain,
When Jamaica shall be lady of the isles and the main;

When Spain shall be in America hid,
And Mexico shall prove a Madrid;
When Africa shall no more sell out their blacks
To make slaves and drudges to the American tracts;

When America shall cease to send out its treasure,

But employ it at home in American pleasure;
When the New World shall the Old invade,
Nor count them their lords but their fellows in trade;

Then think strange things have come to light,
Whereof but few have had a foresight." †

Some of these words are striking, especially when we consider their early date. The author of the "Religio Medici" seems in the main to accept the prophecy. In a commentary on each verse he seeks to explain it. New England is "that thriving colony which hath so much increased in his day"; its people are already "industrious," and when they have so far increased "that the neighboring country will not contain them, they will range still far-

* Johnson, *Life of Sir Thomas Browne*.

† Browne, Works, Vol. IV. pp. 232, 233.

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ther, and be able in time to set forth great armies, seek for new possessions, or make considerable and conjoined migrations." The verse about Africa will be fulfilled "when African countries shall no longer make it a common trade to sell away their people." And this may come to pass "whenever they shall be well civilized and acquainted with arts and affairs sufficient to employ people in their countries." It would also come to pass "if they should be converted to Christianity, but especially into Mahometism; for then they would never sell those of their religion to be slaves unto Christians." The verse about America is expounded as follows: —

"That is, when America shall be better civilized, new politicd, and divided between great princes, it may come to pass that they will no longer suffer their treasure of gold and silver to be sent out to maintain the luxury of Europe and other ports; but rather employ it to their own advantages, in great exploits and undertakings, magnificent structures, wars, or expeditions of their own." *

The other verse, on the invasion of the Old World by the New, is thus explained: —

"That is, when America shall be so well peopled, civilized, and divided into kingdoms, *they are like to have so little regard of their originals as to acknowledge no subjection unto them*; they may also have a distinct commerce themselves, or but independently with those of Europe, and may hostilely and piratically assault them, even as the Greek and Roman colonies after a long time dealt with their original countries." †

That these speculations should arrest the attention of Dr. Johnson is something. They seem to have been in part fulfilled. An editor remarks that, "To judge from the course of events since Sir Thomas wrote, we may not unreasonably look forward to their more complete fulfilment." ‡

BISHOP BERKELEY. — 1726.

It is pleasant to think that Berkeley, whose beautiful verses predicting the future of America are so often quoted, was so sweet and charming a character. Atterbury wrote of him, "So much understanding, knowledge, innocence, and humility I should have thought confined to angels, had I never seen this gentleman." Swift said, "He is an absolute philosopher with regard to money, title, and power." Pope let drop a tribute which can never die, when he said,

"To Berkeley every virtue under Heaven."

Such a person was naturally a seer.

He is compendiously called an Irish prelate and philosopher; he was born in Kilkenny, 1684, and died in Oxford, 1753. He began as a philosopher. While still young, he wrote his famous treatise on "The Principles of Human Knowledge," in which he denies the existence of matter, insisting that it is only an impression produced on the mind by Divine power. After travel for several years on the Continent, and fellowship with the witty and learned at home, among whom were Addison, Swift, Pope, Garth, and Arbuthnot, he conceived the project of educating the aborigines of America, which was set forth in a tract, published in 1725, entitled, "Scheme for Converting the Savage Americans to Christianity by a College to be erected in the Summer Islands, otherwise called the Isles of Bermuda." Persuaded by his benevolence, the ministers promised twenty thousand pounds, and there were several private subscriptions to promote what was called by the king "so pious an undertaking." Berkeley possessed already a deanery in Ireland, with one thousand pounds a year. Turning away from this residence, and refusing to be tempted by an English mitre, offered by the queen, he set sail for Rhode Island, "which lay nearest Bermuda," where, after a tedious passage of five months, he arrived, 23d January, 1729. Here he lived on a farm back of Newport, having been, according to his own report, "at

* Browne, Works, Vol. IV. p. 236.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid., p. 231, note.

great expense for land and stock." In familiar letters he has given his impression of this place, famous since for fashion. "The climate," he says, "is like that of Italy, and not at all colder in the winter than I have known it everywhere north of Rome. This island is pleasantly laid out in hills and vales and rising grounds, hath plenty of excellent springs and fine rivulets and many delightful landscapes of rocks and promontories and adjacent lands. The town of Newport contains about six thousand souls, and is the most thriving, flourishing place in all America for its bigness. It is very pretty and pleasantly situated. I was never more agreeably surprised than at the first sight of the town and its harbor."* He seems to have been contented here, and when his companions went to Boston stayed at home, "preferring," as he wrote, "quiet and solitude to the noise of a great town, notwithstanding all the solicitations that have been used to draw us thither."†

The money which he had expected, especially from the ministry, failed, and after waiting in vain expectation two years and a half, he returned to England, leaving an infant son buried in the yard of Trinity Church, and bestowing upon Yale College a library of eight hundred and eighty volumes, as well as his estate in Rhode Island. During his residence at Newport he had preached every Sunday, and was indefatigable in pastoral duties, besides meditating, if not composing, "The Minute Philosopher," which was published shortly after his return.

He had not been forgotten at home during his absence; and shortly after his return he became Bishop of Cloyne, in which place he was most exemplary, devoting himself to his episcopal duties, to the education of his children, and the pleasures of composition.

It was while occupied with his plan of a college, especially as a nursery for the Colonial churches, shortly before sailing for America, that the future

seemed to be revealed to him, and he wrote the famous poem, the only one to be found among his works, entitled, "Verses on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America."* The date may be fixed at 1726. Such a poem was an historic event. I give the first and last stanzas.

"The Muse, disgusted at an age and clime
Barren of every glorious theme,
*In distant lands now waits a better time,
Producing subjects worthy fame.*

"Westward the course of empire takes its way;
The first four acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day;
Time's noblest offspring is the last."

It is difficult to exaggerate the value of these verses, which have been so often quoted as to become one of the commonplaces of literature and politics. There is nothing from any oracle, there is very little from any prophecy, which can compare with them. The biographer of Berkeley, who wrote in the last century, was very cautious, when, after calling them "a beautiful copy of verses," he says that "another age will, perhaps, acknowledge the old conjunction of the prophetic character with that of the poet to have again taken place."† The *vates* of the Romans was poet and prophet; and such was Berkeley.

The sentiment which prompted the prophetic verses of the good Bishop was widely diffused; or, perhaps, it was a natural prompting.‡ Of this an illustration is afforded in the life of Benjamin West. On his visit to Rome in 1760, the young artist encountered a famous improvisatore, who, on learning that he was an American come to study the fine arts in Rome, at once addressed him with the ardor of inspiration, and to the music of his guitar. After singing the darkness which for so many ages veiled America from the eyes of science, and also the fullness of time when the purposes for which America had been raised from the deep would be manifest, he hailed the youth

* Berkeley, Works, Vol. II. p. 443.

† Ibid., Vol. I., Life prefixed, p. 15.

‡ Grahame, History of the United States, Vol. IV. pp. 136, 448.

* Berkeley, Works, Vol. I., Life prefixed, p. 53.

† Ibid., p. 55.

before him as an instrument of Heaven to raise there a taste for those arts which elevate man, and an assurance of refuge to science and knowledge, when, in the old age of Europe, they should have forsaken her shores. Then, in the spirit of prophecy, he sang : —

*"But all things of heavenly origin, like the glorious sun, move westward; and truth and art have their periods of shining and of night. Rejoice then, O venerable Rome, in thy divine destiny; for though darkness overshadow thy seats, and though thy mitred head must descend into the dust, thy spirit immortal and undecayed already spreads towards a new world."**

John Adams, in his old age, dwelling on the reminiscences of early life, records that nothing was "more ancient in his memory than the observation that arts, sciences, and empire had travelled westward, and in conversation it was always added, since he was a child, that their next leap would be over the Atlantic into America." With the assistance of an octogenarian neighbor, he recalled a couplet that had been repeated with rapture as long as he could remember : —

*"The Eastern nations sink, their glory ends,
And empire rises where the sun descends."*

It was imagined by his neighbor that these lines came from some of our early pilgrims, — by whom they had been "inscribed, or rather drilled, into a rock on the shore of Monument Bay in our old Colony of Plymouth." †

Another illustration of this same sentiment will be found in Burnaby's "Travels through the Middle Settlements of North America, in 1759 and 1760," a work which was first published in 1775. In his reflections at the close of his book the traveller thus remarks : —

"An idea, strange as it is visionary, has entered into the minds of the generality of mankind, that empire is travelling westward : and every one is looking forward with eager and impatient expectation to that destined moment when

*America is to give the law to the rest of the world."**

The traveller is none the less an authority for the prevalence of this sentiment because he declares it "illusory and fallacious," and records his conviction that "America is formed for happiness, but not for empire." Happy America! What empire can compare with happiness! But, to make amends for this admission, the jealous traveller, in his edition of 1796, after the adoption of our Constitution, announces that "the present union of American States will not be permanent, or last for any considerable length of time," and "that that extensive country must necessarily be divided into separate states and kingdoms." † Thus far the Union has stood against all shocks, foreign or domestic; and the prophecy of Berkeley is more than ever in the popular mind.

TURGOT. — 1750.

AMONG the illustrious names of France there are few equal to that of Turgot. He was a philosopher among ministers, and a minister among philosophers. Malesherbes said of him, that he had the heart of L'Hôpital and the head of Bacon. Such a person in public affairs was an epoch for his country and for the human race. Had his spirit prevailed, the bloody drama of the French Revolution would not have occurred, or it would at least have been postponed. I think it could not have occurred. He was a good man, who sought to carry into government the rules of goodness. His career from beginning to end was one continuous beneficence. Such a nature was essentially prophetic, for he discerned the natural laws by which the future is governed.

He was of an ancient Norman family, whose name suggests the *god Thor*; he was born at Paris, 1727, and died, 1781. Being a younger son, he was destined for the Church, and commenced his

* Galt, *Life of West*, Vol. I. pp. 116, 117.

† John Adams, *Works*, Vol. IX. pp. 597 — 599.

* Burnaby, *Travels*, p. 115.

† *Ibid.*, Preface, p. 21.

studies as an ecclesiastic at the ancient Sorbonne. Before registering an irrevocable vow, he announced his repugnance to the profession, and turned aside to other pursuits. Law, literature, science, humanity, government, now engaged his attention. He associated himself with the writers of the Encyclopædia, and became one of its contributors. In other writings he vindicated especially the virtue of toleration. Not merely a theorist, he soon arrived at the high post of intendant of Limousin, where he developed a remarkable talent for administration, and a sympathy with the people. He introduced the potato into that province. But he continued to employ his pen, especially on questions of political economy, which he treated as a master. On the accession of Louis XVI. he was called to the cabinet as Minister of the Marine, and shortly afterwards he gave up this place to be the head of the finances. Here he began a system of rigid economy, founded on a curtailment of expenses and an enlargement of resources. The latter was obtained especially by a removal of disabilities from trade, whether at home or abroad, and the substitution of a single tax on land for a complex multiplicity of taxes. The enemies of progress were too strong at that time, and the king dismissed the reformer. Good men in France became anxious for the future; Voltaire, in his distant retreat, gave a shriek of despair, and addressed to Turgot some remarkable verses entitled *Épître à un Homme*. Worse still, the good edicts of the minister were rescinded, and society was put back.

The discarded minister gave himself to science, literature, and friendship. He welcomed Franklin to France and to immortality in a Latin verse of marvellous felicity. He was already the companion of the liberal spirits who were doing so much for knowledge and for reform. By writing and by conversation he exercised a constant influence. His "ideas" seem to illumine the time. We may be content

to follow him in saying, "The glory of arms cannot compare with the happiness of living in peace." He anticipated our definition of a republic, when he said "it was formed upon the *equality of all the citizens*,"—good words, not yet practically verified in all our States. Such a government he, living under a monarchy, bravely pronounced the best of all; but he added that he "had never known a constitution truly republican." This was in 1778. With similar plainness he announced that "the destruction of the Ottoman empire would be a real good for all the nations of Europe," and—he added still further—for humanity also, because it would involve the abolition of negro slavery, and because to strip "our oppressors is not to attack, but to vindicate, the common rights of humanity." With such thoughts and aspirations, the prophet died.

But I have no purpose of writing a biography, or even a character. All that I intend is an introduction to Turgot's prophetic words relating to America. When only twenty-three years of age, while still an ecclesiastic at the Sorbonne, the future minister delivered a discourse on the Progress of the Human Mind, in which, after describing the commercial triumphs of the ancient Phœnicians, covering the coasts of Greece and Asia with their colonies, he lets drop these remarkable words:—

"Les colonies sont comme des fruits qui ne tiennent à l'arbre que jusqu'à leur maturité; devenues suffisantes à elles-mêmes, elles firent ce que fit depuis Carthage, — *ce que fera un jour l'Amérique*." *

"Colonies are like fruits, which hold to the tree only until their maturity; when sufficient for themselves, they did that which Carthage afterwards did, — *that which some day America will do*."

On this most suggestive declaration,

* Turgot, *Œuvres*, Tome II. p. 66. See also Condorcet, *Œuvres*, Tome IV., *Vie de Turgot*; Louis Blanc, *Histoire de la Révolution Française*, Tome I. pp. 527–533.

Dupont de Nemours, the editor of Turgot's works, published in 1808, remarks in a note as follows :—

"It was in 1750 that M. Turgot, being then only twenty-three years old, and devoted in a seminary to the study of theology, divined, foresaw the revolution which has formed the United States,—which has detached them from the European power apparently the most capable of retaining its colonies under its domination."

At the time Turgot wrote, Canada was a French possession; but his words are as applicable to this colony as to the United States. When will this fruit be ripe?

JOHN ADAMS.—1755, 1776, 1780, 1785, 1787.

NEXT in time among the prophets was John Adams, who has left on record at different dates several predictions which show a second-sight of no common order. Of his life I need say nothing, except that he was born 19th October, 1735, and died 4th July, 1826. I mention the predictions in the order of their utterance.

1. While teaching a school at Worcester, and when under twenty years of age, he wrote a letter to one of his youthful companions, bearing date 12th October, 1755, which is a marvel of foresight. Fifty-two years afterwards, when already much of its prophecy had been fulfilled, the original was returned to its author by the son of his early comrade and correspondent, Nathan Webb, who was at the time dead. In this letter, after remarking gravely on the rise and fall of nations, with illustrations from Carthage and Rome, he proceeds :—

"England began to increase in power and magnificence, and is now the greatest nation of the globe. Soon after the Reformation, a few people came over into this New World for conscience' sake. Perhaps this apparently trivial incident may transfer the great seat of empire to America. It looks likely to me; for if we can remove the turbulent Gallics, our people, according to the

exactest computations, will, in another century, become more numerous than England itself. Should this be the case, since we have, I may say, all the naval stores of the nations in our hands, it will be easy to obtain the mastery of the seas; and then the united force of all Europe will not be able to subdue us. The only way to keep us from setting up for ourselves is to disunite us. *Divide et impera.* Keep us in distinct colonies, and then, some great men in each colony desiring the monarchy of the whole, they will destroy each others' influence, and keep the country in *equilibrio.*"*

On this letter his son, John Quincy Adams, remarks :—

"Had the political part of it been written by the minister of state of a European monarchy, at the close of a long life spent in the government of nations, it would have been pronounced worthy of the united wisdom of a Burleigh, a Sully, or an Oxenstiern. . . . In one bold outline he has exhibited by anticipation a long succession of prophetic history, the fulfilment of which is barely yet in progress, responding exactly hitherto to his foresight, but the full accomplishment of which is reserved for the development of after ages. The extinction of the power of France in America, the union of the British North American Colonies, the achievement of their independence, and the establishment of their ascendancy in the community of civilized nations by the means of their naval power, are all foreshadowed in this letter, with a clearness of perception and a distinctness of delineation which time has done little more than to convert into historical fact."†

2. The Declaration of Independence bears date 4th July, 1776, for on that day it was signed; but the vote which determined it was on the 2d July. On the 3d July, John Adams, in a letter to his wife, wrote as follows :—

"Yesterday the greatest question

* John Adams, Works, Vol. I. p. 23. See also Vol. IX. pp. 501, 502.

† Ibid., Vol. I. pp. 24, 25.

was decided which ever was debated in America, and a greater, perhaps, never was nor will be decided among men. . . . I am surprised at the suddenness as well as greatness of this revolution. Britain has been filled with folly, and America with wisdom. At least this is my judgment. Time must determine. *It is the will of Heaven that the two countries should be sundered forever. . . .* The day is past. The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epocha in the history of America. *I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival.* It ought to be commemorated, as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward, forevermore. You will think me transported with enthusiasm, but I am not. I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost us to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States. *Yet, through all the gloom, I can see the ray of ravishing light and glory; and that posterity will triumph in that day's transaction,* even although we should rue it, which I trust in God we shall not." *

Here is a comprehensive prophecy, first, that the two countries would be separated forever; secondly, that the anniversary of Independence would be celebrated as a great annual festival; and, thirdly, that posterity would triumph in this transaction, where, through all the gloom, shone rays of ravishing light and glory; all of which has been fulfilled to the letter. Recent events give to the Declaration additional importance. For a long time its great promises that all men are equal, and that rightful government stands only on the consent of the governed, were disowned by our country. Now that at last they are beginning to prevail, there

is increased reason to celebrate the day on which the mighty Declaration was made, and new occasion for triumph in the rays of ravishing light and glory.

3. Here is another prophetic passage in a letter dated at Paris, 13th July, 1780, and addressed to the Count de Vergennes of France, pleading the cause of the colonists:—

"The United States of America are a great and powerful people, whatever European statesmen may think of them. If we take into our estimate the numbers and the character of her people, the extent, variety, and fertility of her soil, her commerce, and her skill and materials for ship-building, and her seamen, excepting France, Spain, England, Germany, and Russia, there is not a state in Europe so powerful. Breaking off such a nation as this from the English so suddenly, and uniting it so closely with France, is one of the most extraordinary events that ever happened among mankind." *

Perhaps this may be considered a statement rather than a prophecy; but it illustrates the prophetic character of the writer.

4. In an official letter to the President of Congress, dated at Amsterdam, 5th September, 1780, the same writer, while proposing an American Academy for refining, improving, and ascertaining the English language, thus predicts the extension of this language:—

"English is destined to be in the next and succeeding centuries more generally the language of the world than Latin was in the last or French is in the present age. The reason of this is obvious,—because the increasing population in America, and their universal connection and correspondence with all nations, will, aided by the influence of England in the world, whether great or small, force their language into general use, in spite of all the obstacles that may be thrown in their way, if any such there should be." †

In another letter of an unofficial character, dated at Amsterdam, 23d Septem-

* John Adams, Works, Vol. I. pp. 230, 232.

* Ibid., Vol. VII. p. 227.

† Ibid., p. 250.

ber, 1780, he thus repeats his prophecy:—

"You must know *I have undertaken to prophesy that English will be the most respectable language in the world, and the most universally read and spoken in the next century, if not before the close of this.* American population will in the next age produce a greater number of persons who will speak English than any other language, and these persons will have more general acquaintance and conversation with all other nations than any other people."*

This prophecy is already accomplished. Of all the European languages, English is most extensively spoken. Through England and the United States it has become the language of commerce, which, sooner or later, must embrace the globe. The German philologist, Grimm, has followed our American prophet in saying that it "seems chosen, like its people, to rule in future times in a still greater degree in all the corners of the earth."†

5. There is another prophecy, at once definite and broad, which proceeded from the same eminent quarter. In a letter dated London, 17th October, 1785, and addressed to John Jay, who was at the time Secretary for Foreign Affairs under the Confederation, John Adams reveals his conviction of the importance of France to us, "while England held a province in America";‡ and then, in another letter, dated 21st October, 1785, reports the saying of people about him, "*that Canada and Nova Scotia must soon be ours*"; there must be war for it; they know how it will end, but the sooner the better. This done, we shall be forever at peace; till then, never."§ These intimations foreshadow the prophecy which will be found in the Preface to his "Defence of the American Constitution," written in London, while he was Minister there, and dated at Grosvenor Square, 1st January, 1787:—

"The United States of America have exhibited, perhaps, the first example of governments erected on the simple principles of nature. . . . Thirteen governments thus founded on the natural authority of the people alone, without a pretence of miracle or mystery, and which are destined to spread over the northern part of that whole quarter of the globe, are a great point gained in favor of the rights of mankind. The experiment is made, and has completely succeeded."*

Here is foretold nothing less than that our system of government is to embrace the whole continent of North America.

GALIANI. — 1776, 1778.

AMONG the most brilliant persons in this list is the Abbé Galiani, a Neapolitan, who was born in 1728, and died at Naples in 1787. Although Italian by birth, yet by the accident of official residence he became for a while domesticated in France, wrote the French language, and now enjoys a French reputation. His writings in French and his letters have the wit and ease of Voltaire.

Galiani was a genius. Whatever he touched shone at once with his brightness, in which there was originality as well as knowledge. He was a finished scholar, and very successful in lapidary verses. Early in life, while in Italy, he wrote a grave essay on Money, which contrasted with another of rare humor suggested by the death of the public executioner. Other essays followed, and then came the favor of that congenial pontiff, Benedict XIV. In 1760 he found himself at Paris, as Secretary of the Neapolitan Embassy. Here he mingled with the courtiers officially, according to the duties of his position, but he fraternized with the liberal and sometimes audacious spirits who exercised such an influence over society and literature. He was soon recognized as one of them, and as inferior to none. His petty stature was forgotten, when he conversed with inexhaustible

* John Adams, Works, Vol. IX. p. 510.

† Keith Johnston, Physical Atlas, p. 114.

‡ John Adams, Works, Vol. VIII. p. 322.

§ Ibid. p. 33.

* John Adams, Works, Vol. IV. p. 293.

faculties of all kinds, so that he seemed an Encyclopædia, Harlequin, and Machiavelli all in one. The atheists at the Thursday dinner of D'Holbach were confounded, while he enforced the existence of God. Into the questions of political economy which occupied attention at the time he entered with a pen which seemed borrowed from the French Academy. His *Dialogues sur le Commerce des Blés* had the success of a romance; ladies carried this book on corn in their work-baskets. Returning to Naples, he continued to live in Paris through his correspondence, especially with Madame d'Épinay, the Baron d'Holbach, Diderot, and Grimm.*

Among his later works, after his return to Naples, was a solid volume—not to be forgotten in the History of International Law—on the “Rights of Neutrals,” where a difficult subject is treated with such mastery that, half a century later, D’Hautefeuille, in his elaborate treatise, copies from it at length. Galiani was the predecessor of this French writer in the extreme assertion of neutral rights. Other works were left at his death in manuscript, some grave and some humorous; also letters without number. The letters he had preserved from Italian *savans* filled eight large volumes; those from *savans*, ministers, and sovereigns abroad filled fourteen. His Parisian correspondence did not see the light till 1818, although some of the letters may be found in the contemporary correspondence of Grimm.

In his Parisian letters, which are addressed chiefly to that clever individuality, Madame d'Épinay, the Neapolitan Abbé shows not only the brilliancy and nimbleness of his talent, but the universality of his knowledge and the boldness of his speculations. Here are a few words from a letter dated at Naples, 12th October, 1776, in which he brings forward the idea of “races,” so important in our day, with an illustration from Russia:—

“*All depends on races.* The first, the most noble of races, comes naturally from the North of Asia. The Russians are the nearest to it, and this is the reason why they have made more progress in fifty years than can be got out of the Portuguese in five hundred.”*

Belonging to the Latin race, Galiani was entitled to speak thus freely.

1. In another letter to Madame d'Épinay, dated at Naples, 18th May, 1776, he had already foretold the success of our Revolution. Few prophets have been more explicit than he was in the following passage:—

“Livy said of his age, which so much resembled ours, ‘*Ad hæc tempora ventum est quibus, nec vitia nostra, nec remedia pati possumus.*’—‘We are in an age where the remedies hurt as much as the vices.’ Do you know the reality? *The epoch has come of the total fall of Europe, and of transmigration into America.* All here turns into rottenness,—religion, laws, arts, sciences,—and all hastens to renew itself in America. This is not a jest; nor is it an idea drawn from the English quarrels; I have said it, announced it, preached it, for more than twenty years, and I have constantly seen my prophecies come to pass. *Therefore, do not buy your house in the Chaussée d’Antin; you must buy it in Philadelphia.* My trouble is that there are no abbeyes in America.”†

This letter was written some months before the Declaration of Independence was known in Europe.

2. In another letter, dated at Naples, 7th February, 1778, the Abbé alludes to the “quantities” of English men and women who have come to Naples “for shelter from the American tempest,” and adds, “Meanwhile the Washingtons and Hancocks will be fatal to them.”‡ In still another, dated at Naples, 25 July, 1778, he renews

* Galiani, Correspondence, Tome II. p. 221. See also Grimm, Correspondence, Tome IX. p. 282.

† Galiani, Tome II. p. 203; Grimm, Tome IX. p. 285.

‡ Galiani, Tome II. p. 275.

* *Biographie Universelle* of Michaud; also of Didot: Louis Blanc, *Histoire de la Révolution Française*, Tome I. pp. 390, 545–551.

his prophecies in language still more explicit:—

“You will at this time have decided the greatest revolution of the globe; namely, *if it is America which is to reign over Europe, or if it is Europe which is to continue to reign over America.* I will wager in favor of America, for the reason merely physical, that for five thousand years genius has turned opposite to the diurnal motion, and travelled from the East to the West.”*

Here again is the idea of Berkeley which has been so captivating.

ADAM SMITH.—1776.

IN contrast with the witty Italian is the illustrious philosopher and writer of Scotland, Adam Smith, who was born 5th June, 1723, and died 17th July, 1790. His fame is so commanding that any details of his life or works would be out of place on this occasion. He was a thinker and an inventor, through whom mankind was advanced in knowledge.

I say nothing of his “Theory of Moral Sentiments,” which constitutes an important contribution to the science of ethics, but come at once to his great work of political economy, entitled “Inquiry into the Nature and Sources of the Wealth of Nations,” which first appeared in 1776. Its publication marks an epoch which is described by Mr. Buckle when he says: “Adam Smith contributed more, by the publication of this single work, toward the happiness of man, than has been effected by the united abilities of all the statesmen and legislators of whom history has preserved an authentic account.” The work is full of prophetic knowledge, and especially with regard to the British colonies. Writing while the debate with the mother country was still pending, Adam Smith urged that they should be admitted to Parliamentary representation in proportion to taxation, so that their representation would enlarge with their growing resources; and here

he predicts nothing less than the transfer of empire.

“The distance of America from the seat of government, the natives of that country might flatter themselves, with some appearance of reason too, would not be of very long continuance. Such has hitherto been the rapid progress of that country in wealth, population, and improvement, that, in the course of little more than a century, perhaps, the produce of America might exceed that of British taxation. *The seat of the empire would then naturally remove itself to that part of the empire which contributed most to the general defence and support of the whole.*”*

In these tranquil words of assured science this great author carries the seat of government across the Atlantic.

GOVERNOR POWNALL.—1777, 1780, 1785.

AMONG the best friends of our country abroad during the trials of the Revolution was Thomas Pownall, called by one biographer “a learned antiquary and politician,” and by another “an English statesman and author.” Latterly he has so far dropped out of sight, that there are few who recognize in him either of these characters. He was born, 1722, and died at Bath, 1805. During this long period he held several offices. As early as 1745 he became secretary to the Commission for Trade and Plantations. In 1753 he crossed the ocean. In 1755, as Commissioner for Massachusetts Bay, he negotiated with New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, in union with New England, the confederated expedition against Crown Point. He was afterwards Governor of Massachusetts Bay, New Jersey, and South Carolina, successively. Returning to England, he was, in 1761, Comptroller-General of the army in Germany, with the military rank of Colonel. He sat in three successive Parliaments until 1780, when he passed into private

* Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Book IV. cap. 7, part 3.

* Galiani, *Tome II.* p. 275.

life. Hildreth gives a glimpse at his personal character, when, admitting his frank manners and liberal politics, he describes his "habits as rather freer than suited the New England standard." *

Pownall stands forth conspicuous for his championship of our national independence, and especially for his foresight with regard to our national future. In both these respects his writings are unique. Other Englishmen were in favor of our independence, and saw our future also; but I doubt if any one can be named who was his equal in strenuous action, or in minuteness of foresight. While the war was still proceeding, as early as 1780, he openly announced, not only that independence was inevitable, but that the new nation, "founded in nature and built up in truth," would continually expand; that its population would increase and multiply; that a civilizing activity beyond what Europe could ever know would animate it; and that its commercial and naval power would be found in every quarter of the globe. All this he set forth at length with argument and illustration, and he called his prophetic words "the *stating of the simple fact*, so little understood in the Old World." Treated at first as "unintelligible speculation" and as "unfashionable," the truth he announced was neglected where it was not rejected, but generally rejected as inadmissible, and the author, according to his own language, "was called by the wise men of the British Cabinet *a Wild Man*, unfit to be employed." But these writings are a better title now than any office. In manner they are diffuse and pedantic; but they hardly deserve the cold judgment of John Adams, who in his old age said of them, that "a reader who has patience to search for good sense in an uncouth and disgusting style will find in those writings proofs of a thinking mind." †

He seems to have written a good

deal. But the works which will be remembered the longest are not even mentioned by several of his biographers. Rose, in his Biographical Dictionary, records works by him, entitled *Antiquities of Ancient Greece*; *Roman Antiquities dug up at Bath*; *Observations on the Currents of the Ocean*; *Intellectual Physics*; and also contributions to the *Archæologia*. Gorton in his Biographical Dictionary adds some other titles to this list. But neither mentions his works on America. This is another instance where the stone rejected by the builders becomes the head of the corner.

At an early date Pownall comprehended the position of our country, geographically. He saw the wonderful means of internal communication supplied by its inland waters, and also the opportunities of external commerce supplied by the Atlantic Ocean. On the first he dwells, in a memorial *drawn up in 1756* for the Duke of Cumberland.* Nobody in our own day, after the experience of more than a century, has portrayed more vividly the two masses of waters,—one composed of the great lakes and their dependencies, and the other of the Mississippi and its tributaries. The great lakes are described as "a wilderness of waters spreading over the country by an infinite number and variety of branchings, bays, and straits." The Mississippi, with its eastern branch, called the Ohio, is described as having, "so far as we know, but two falls,—one at a place called, by the French, *St. Antoine*, high up on the west or main branch"; and all its waters "run to the ocean with a still, easy, and gentle current." The picture is completed by exhibiting the two masses of water in combination:—

"The waters of each respective mass—not only the lesser streams, but the main general body of each going through this continent in every course and direction—have by their approach to each other, by their communication

* Hildreth, *History of the United States*, Vol. II. p. 476.

† John Adams, *Works*, Vol. X. p. 241.

* Pownall, *Administration of the Colonies*, Appendix, p. 7.

to every quarter and in every direction, an alliance and unity, and form one mass, or one whole." *

Again, depicting the intercommunication among the several waters of the continent, and how "the watery element claims and holds dominion over this extent of land," he insists that all shall see these two mighty masses in their central throne, declaring that "the great lakes which lie upon its bosom on one hand, and the great river Mississippi and the multitude of waters which run into it, form there a communication,—an alliance or dominion of the watery element, that commands throughout the whole; that these great lakes appear to be the throne, the centre of a dominion, whose influence, by an infinite number of rivers, creeks, and streams, extends itself through all and every part of the continent, supported by the communication of, and alliance with, the waters of the Mississippi." †

If these means of internal commerce were vast, those afforded by the Atlantic Ocean were not less extensive. The latter were developed in the volume entitled "The Administration of the Colonies," the fourth edition of which, published in 1768, is now before me. This was after the differences between the Colonies and the mother country had begun, but before the idea of independence had shown itself. Pownall insisted that the Colonies ought to be considered as parts of the realm, entitled to representation in Parliament. This was a constitutional unity. But he portrayed a commercial unity also, which he represented in attractive forms. The British isles, and the British possessions in the Atlantic and in America, were, according to him, "one grand marine dominion," and ought, therefore, by policy, to be united into one empire, with one centre. On this he dwells at length, and the picture is presented repeatedly.‡ It was incident to the crisis produced in the world by the predominance of the commercial spirit

which already began to rule the powers of Europe. It was the duty of England to place herself at the head of this great movement.

"As the rising of this crisis forms precisely the *object* on which government should be employed, so the taking leading measures towards the forming all those Atlantic and American possessions into one empire, of which Great Britain should be the commercial and political centre, is the *precise duty* of government at this crisis."

This was his desire. But he saw clearly the resources as well as the rights of the Colonies, and was satisfied that, if power were not consolidated under the constitutional auspices of England, it would be transferred to the other side of the Atlantic. Here his words are prophetic:—

"The whole train of events, the whole course of business, must perpetually bring forward into practice, and necessarily in the end into establishment, *either an American or a British union*. There is no other alternative."

The necessity for union is enforced in a manner which foreshadows our national Union:—

"The Colonial Legislature does not answer all purposes; is incompetent and inadequate to many purposes. Something more is necessary,—*either a common union among themselves*, or a common union of subordination under the one general legislature of the state." *

Then, again, in another place of the same work, after representing the declarations of power over the Colonies as little better than mockery, he prophesies again:—

"Such is the actual state of the really existing system of our dominions, that *neither the power of government over these various parts can long continue under the present mode of administration*, nor the great interests of commerce extended throughout the whole long subsist under the present system of the laws of trade." †

* Pownall, Administration of the Colonies, Appendix, p. 6.

† Ibid., p. 9.

‡ Pownall, Colonies, pp. 9, 10, 164.

* Pownall, Administration of the Colonies, p. 165.

† Ibid., p. 164.

Recent events may give present interest to his views, in this same work, on the nature and necessity of a paper currency, where he follows Franklin. The principal points of his plan were, that bills of credit, to a certain amount, should be printed in England for the use of the Colonies; that a loan-office should be established in each Colony to issue bills, take securities, and receive the payment; that the bills should be issued for ten years, bearing interest at five per cent,—one tenth part of the sum borrowed to be paid annually, with interest; and that they should be a legal tender.

When the differences had flamed forth in war, then the prophet became more earnest. His utterances deserve to be rescued from oblivion. He was open, and almost defiant. As early as *2d December, 1777*, some months before our treaty with France, he declared, from his place in Parliament, "that the sovereignty of this country over America is abolished and gone forever"; "that they are determined at all events to be independent, *and will be so*"; and "that all the treaty this country can ever expect with America is federal, and that, probably, only commercial." In this spirit he said to the House:—

"Until you shall be convinced that you are no longer sovereigns over America, but that the United States are an independent, sovereign people,—until you are prepared to treat with them as such,—it is of no consequence at all what schemes or plans of conciliation this side of the House or that may adopt."*

The position taken in Parliament he maintained by writings, and here he depicted the great destinies of our country. He began with a work entitled "A Memorial to the Sovereigns of Europe," which was published early in 1780, and was afterwards, through the influence of John Adams, while at the Hague, abridged and translated into French. In this remarkable production independence was the least that he

claimed for us. Thus he foretells our future:—

"North America is become a new primary planet in the system of the world, which, while it takes its own course, must have effect on the orbit of every other planet, and shift the common centre of gravity of the whole system of the European world. North America is *de facto* an independent power, which has taken its equal station with other powers, and must be so *de jure*. . . . The independence of America is fixed as fate. She is mistress of her own future, knows that she is so, and will actuate that power which she feels she hath, so as to establish her own system *and to change the system of Europe*."*

Not only is the new power to take an independent place, but it is "to change the system of Europe." For all this its people are amply prepared. "Standing on that high ground of improvement up to which the most enlightened parts of Europe have advanced, like eaglets, they commence the first efforts of their pinions from a towering advantage."† Then again, giving expression to this same conviction in another form, he says:—

"North America has advanced, and is every day advancing, to growth of state, with a steady and continually accelerating motion, of which there has never yet been any example in Europe."‡ "It is a vitality, liable to many disorders, many dangerous diseases; but it is young and strong, and will struggle, by the vigor of internal healing principles of life, against those evils, and surmount them. Its strength will grow with its years."§

He then dwells in detail on "the progressive population" here; on our advantage in being "on the other side of the globe, where there is no enemy"; on the products of the soil, among which is "bread-corn to a degree that has wrought it to a staple export for

* Pownall, Memorial to the Sovereigns of Europe, pp. 4, 5.

† Ibid., p. 43.

‡ Ibid., p. 56.

§ Ibid., p. 69.

* Parliamentary History, Vol. XIX. pp. 527, 528. See also p. 1137.

the supply of the Old World"; on the fisheries, which he calls "mines of more solid riches than all the silver of Potosi"; on the inventive spirit of the people; and on their commercial activity. Of such a people it is easy to predict great things; and our prophet announces,—

1. That the new state will be "an active naval power," exercising a peculiar influence on commerce, and, through commerce, on the political system of the Old World,—becoming the arbitress of commerce, and, perhaps, the mediatrix of peace.*

2. That ship-building and the science of navigation have made such progress in America, that her people will be able to build and navigate cheaper than any country in Europe, even Holland, with all her economy.†

3. That the peculiar articles to be had from America only, and so much sought in Europe, must give Americans a preference in those markets.‡

4. That a people "whose empire stands singly predominant on a great continent" can hardly "suffer in their borders such a monopoly as the European Hudson Bay Company"; that it cannot be stopped by Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope; that before long they will be found "trading in the South Sea and in China"; and that the Dutch "will hear of them in the Spice Islands."§

5. That by constant intercommunion of business and correspondence, and by increased knowledge with regard to the ocean, "America will seem every day to approach nearer and nearer to Europe"; that the old alarm at the sea will subside, and "a thousand attractive motives will become the irresistible cause of an almost general emigration to the New World"; and that "many of the most useful, enterprising spirits, and much of the active property, will go there also."||

* Pownall, Memorial to the Sovereigns of Europe, pp. 74, 77.

† Ibid., p. 82.

‡ Ibid., p. 83.

§ Ibid., p. 85.

|| Ibid., p. 87.

6. That "North America will become a *free port* to all the nations of the world indiscriminately, and will expect, insist on, and demand, in fair reciprocity, a *free market* in all those nations with whom she trades"; and that, adhering to this principle, she must be, in the course of time, the chief carrier of the commerce of the whole world."*

7. That America must avoid complication with European politics, or "the entanglement of alliances," having no connections with Europe other than commercial;†—all of which at a later day was put forth by Washington in his Farewell Address, when he said, "The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political concern as possible."

8. That similar modes of living and thinking, the same manners and same fashions, the same language and old habits of national love, impressed on the heart and not yet effaced, *the very indentings of the fracture where North America is broken off from England, all conspire naturally to a rejuncture by alliance.*‡

9. That the sovereigns of Europe, "who have despised the unfashioned, awkward youth of America," and have neglected to interweave their interests with the rising States, when they find the system of the new empire not only obstructing, but superseding, the old system of Europe, and crossing all their settled maxims, will call upon their ministers and wise men, "Come, curse me this people, for they are too mighty for me."§

This appeal was followed by two other memorials, "drawn up solely for the king's use, and designed solely for his eye," dated at Richmond, January, 1782, in which the author most persuasively pleads with the king to treat with the Colonies on the footing of indepen-

* Pownall, Memorial to the Sovereigns of Europe, pp. 80, 97.

† Ibid., p. 78.

‡ Ibid., p. 93.

§ Ibid., p. 91.

dence, and with this view to institute a preliminary negotiation "as with free states *de facto* under a truce." On the signature of the treaty of peace, he wrote a private letter to Franklin, dated at Richmond, 28th February, 1783, in which he testifies again to the magnitude of the event, as follows:—

"My old Friend,—I write this to congratulate you on the establishment of your country as a free and sovereign power, taking its equal station amongst the powers of the world. I congratulate you, in particular, as chosen by Providence to be a principal instrument in this great Revolution,—*a Revolution that has stranger marks of Divine interposition, superseding the ordinary course of human affairs, than any other event which this world has experienced.*"

He closes this letter by saying that he thought of making a tour of America, adding that, "if there ever was an object worth travelling to see, and worthy of the contemplation of a philosopher, it is that in which he may see the beginning of a great empire at its foundation."* He communicated this purpose also to John Adams, who answered him, that "he would be received respectfully in every part of America,—that he had always been considered friendly to America,—and that his writings had been useful to our cause."†

Then came another work, first published in 1783, entitled, "A Memorial addressed to the Sovereigns of America, by Governor Pownall," of which he gave the mistaken judgment to a private friend, that it was "the best thing he ever wrote." Here for the first time American citizens are called "sovereigns." At the beginning he explains and indicates the simplicity with which he addresses them:—

"Having presumed to address to the Sovereigns of Europe a Memorial . . . permit me now to address this Memorial to you, Sovereigns of America. I shall not address you with the court

titles of Gothic Europe, nor with those of servile Asia. I will neither address your Sublimity or Majesty, your Grace or Holiness, your Eminence or High-mightiness, your Excellence or Honors. What are titles, where things themselves are known and understood? What title did the Republic of Rome take? The state was known to be sovereign and the citizens to be free. What could add to this? Therefore, United States and Citizens of America, I address you as you are."*

Here again are the same constant sympathy with liberty, the same confidence in our national destinies, and the same aspirations for our prosperity, mingled with warnings against disturbing influences. He exhorts that all our foundations should be "laid in nature"; that there should be "no contention for, nor acquisition of, unequal domination in men"; and that union should be established on the attractive principle by which all are drawn to a common centre. He fears difficulty in making the line of frontier between us and the British Provinces "a line of peace," as it ought to be; he is anxious lest something may break out between us and Spain; and he suggests that possibly, "in the cool hours of unimpassioned reflection," we may learn the danger of our "alliances,"—referring plainly to that original alliance with France which, at a later day, was the occasion of such trouble. Two other warnings occur. One is against Slavery, which is more noteworthy, because in an earlier memorial he enumerates among articles of commerce "African slaves carried by a circuitous trade in American shipping to the West India market."† The other warning is thus strongly expressed:—"Every inhabitant of America is, *de facto* as well as *de jure*, equal, in his essential, inseparable rights of the individual, to any other individual, and is, in these rights, independent of any power that

* Franklin, Works, Vol. IX. p. 491.

† John Adams, Works, Vol. VIII. p. 179.

* Pownall, Memorial to the Sovereigns of America, pp. 5, 6.

† Pownall, Memorial to the Sovereigns of Europe, p. 83.

any other can assume over him, over his labor, or his property. This is a principle in act and deed, and not a mere speculative theorem.*

I close this strange and striking testimony, all from one man, with his farewell words to Franklin. As Pownall heard that the great philosopher and negotiator was about to embark for the United States, he wrote to him from Lausanne, *under date of 3d July, 1785*, as follows:—

“Adieu, my dear friend. You are going to a New World, formed to exhibit a scene which the Old World never yet saw. You leave me here in the Old World, which, like myself, begins to feel, as Asia hath felt, that it is wearing out apace. We shall never meet again on this earth; but there is another world where we shall, and *where we shall be understood.*”

Clearly Pownall was not understood in his time; but it is evident that he understood our country as few Englishmen since have been able to understand it.

DAVID HARTLEY. — 1775, 1785.

ANOTHER friend of our country in England was David Hartley. He was constant and even pertinacious on our side, although less prophetic than Pownall, with whom he co-operated in purpose and activity. His father was Hartley the metaphysician, and author of the ingenious theory of sensation. The son was born 1729, and died at Bath, 1813. During our revolution he sat in Parliament for Kingston-upon-Hull. He was also the British plenipotentiary in negotiating the definitive Treaty of Peace with the United States. He, too, has dropped out of sight. In the biographical dictionaries he has only a few lines. But he deserves a considerable place in the history of our independence.

John Adams was often austere, and

* Pownall, Memorial to the Sovereigns of America, p. 55.

sometimes cynical in his judgments. Evidently he did not like Hartley. In one place he speaks of him as “talkative and disputatious, and not always intelligible”;* then, as “a person of consummate vanity”;† and then, again, when he was appointed to sign the definitive Treaty, he says, “it would have been more agreeable to have finished with Mr. Oswald”;‡ and, in still another place, he records, “Mr. Hartley was as copious as usual.”§ And yet, when writing most elaborately to Count de Vergennes on the prospects of the negotiation with England, he introduces opinions of Hartley at length, saying that he was “more for peace than any man in the kingdom.”|| Such testimony may well outweigh the other expressions, especially as nothing of the kind appears in the correspondence of Franklin, with whom Hartley was much more intimate.

The Parliamentary History is a sufficient monument for Hartley. He was a frequent speaker, and never missed an opportunity of pleading our cause. Although without the immortal eloquence of Burke, he was always clear and full. Many of his speeches seem to have been written out by himself. He was not a tardy convert. He began as “a new member” by supporting an amendment favorable to the Colonies, 5th December, 1774. In March, 1775, he brought forward “propositions for conciliation with America,” which he sustained in an elaborate speech, where he avowed that the American Question had occupied him already for some time:—

“Though I have so lately had the honor of a seat in this House, yet I have for many years turned my thoughts and attention to matters of public concern and national policy. This question of America is now of many years’ standing.”¶

In the course of this speech he thus

* John Adams, Works, Vol. IX. p. 517.

† Ibid., Vol. III. p. 137.

‡ Ibid., Vol. VIII. p. 54.

§ Ibid., Vol. III. p. 363.

|| Ibid., Vol. VII. p. 226.

¶ Parliamentary History, Vol. XVIII. p. 553.

acknowledges the services of New England at Louisburg:—

“In that war too, sir, they took Louisburg from the French, single-handed, without any European assistance,—as mettled an enterprise as any in our history,—an everlasting memorial of the zeal, courage, and perseverance of the troops of New England. The men themselves dragged the cannon over a morass which had always been thought impassable, where neither horses nor oxen could go, and they carried the shot upon their backs. And what was their reward for this forward and spirited enterprise,—for the reduction of this American Dunkirk? Their reward, sir, you know very well; it was given up for a barrier to the Dutch.” *

All his various propositions were negatived; but he was not disheartened. On every occasion he spoke,—now on the budget, then on the address, and then on specific propositions. At this time he asserted the power of Parliament over the Colonies, and he proposed on the 2d November, 1775, that a test of submission by the Colonists should be the recognition of an act of Parliament, “enacting that all the slaves in America should have the trial by jury.”† Shortly afterwards on the 5th December, 1775, he brought forward another set of “propositions for conciliation with America,” where, among other things, he embodied the test on slavery, which he put forward as a compromise; and here his language belongs, not only to the history of our Revolution, but to the history of anti-slavery. While declaring that in his opinion Great Britain was “the aggressor in everything,” he sought to bring the two countries together on a platform of human rights, which he thus explained:—

“The act to be proposed to America, as an auspicious beginning to lay the first stone of universal liberty to mankind, should be what no American could hesitate an instant to comply with,

namely, that every slave in North America should be entitled to his trial by jury in all criminal cases. America cannot refuse to accept and enroll such an act as this, and thereby to re-establish peace and harmony with the parent state. *Let us all be re-united in this, as a foundation to extirpate slavery from the face of the earth. Let those who seek justice and liberty for themselves give that justice and liberty to their fellow-creatures.* With respect to putting a final period to slavery in North America, it should seem best that, when this country had led the way by the act for jury, each Colony, knowing their own peculiar circumstances, should undertake the work in the most practicable way, and that they should endeavor to establish some system by which slavery should be in a certain term of years abolished. *Let the only contention henceforward between Great Britain and America be, which shall exceed the other in zeal for establishing the fundamental rights of liberty for all mankind.*” *

The motion was rejected; but among the twenty-three in its favor were Fox and Burke. During this same month the unwearied defender of our country came forward again, declaring that he could not be “an adviser or a well-wisher to any of the vindictive operations against America, because the cause is unjust; but at the same time he must be equally earnest to secure British interests from destruction,” and he thus prophesies:—

“The fate of America is cast. You may bruise its heel; but you cannot crush its head. It will revive again. *The new world is before them. Liberty is theirs.* They have possession of a free government, their birthright and inheritance, derived to them from their parent state, which the hand of violence cannot wrest from them. If you will cast them off, my last wish is to them, May they go and prosper!”

Again, on the 10th May, 1776, he vindicated anew his original proposi-

* Parliamentary History, Vol. XVIII. p. 556.

† Ibid., p. 846.

* Parliamentary History, Vol. XVIII. p. 1050.

tion, and here again he testifies for peace and against slavery.

"For the sake of peace, therefore, I did propose a test of compromise by an act of acceptance, on the part of the Colonists, of an act of Parliament which should lay *the foundation for the extirpation of the horrid custom of slavery in the New World*. My motion was simply an act of compromise and reconciliation; and, as far as it was a legislative act, it was still to have been applied in correcting the laws of slavery in America, which I considered as repugnant to the laws of the realm of England and to the fundamentals of our constitution. Such a compromise would at the same time have saved the national honor."*

All gratitude to the hero who at this early day vowed himself to the abolition of slavery. Hartley is among the first of abolitionists, with hardly a predecessor except Granville Sharp, and in Parliament absolutely the first. Clarkson was at this time fifteen years old, Wilberforce sixteen. It was only in 1787 that Clarkson obtained the prize for the best Latin essay on the question, "Is it right to make men slaves against their will?" It was not until 1791 that Wilberforce moved for leave to bring in a bill for the abolition of the slave-trade. Surely it is a great honor for one man, that he should have come forward in Parliament as an avowed abolitionist, while he was at the same time a vindicator of our independence.

Again, on the 15th May, 1777, Hartley pleaded for us, saying:—

"At sea, which has hitherto been our prerogative element, they rise against us at a stupendous rate; and if we cannot return to our old mutual hospitalities towards each other, a very few years will show us a most formidable hostile marine, ready to join hands with any of our enemies. . . . I will venture to prophesy that the principles of a federal alliance are the only terms of peace that ever will and that ever

ought to obtain between the two countries."*

On the 15th June, immediately afterwards, the Parliamentary History reports briefly:—

"Mr. Hartley went upon the cruelties of slavery, and urged the Board of Trade to take some means of mitigating it. He produced a pair of handcuffs, which he said was a manufacture they were now going to establish."†

Thus again the abolitionist reappeared in the vindicator of our independence. On the 22d June, 1779, he brought forward another formal motion "for reconciliation with America," and, in the course of a well-considered speech, denounced the ministers for "headstrong and inflexible obstinacy in prosecuting a cruel and destructive American war."‡ On the 3d December, 1779, in what is called "a very long speech," he returned to his theme, inveighing against ministers for "the favorite, though wild, Quixotic, and impracticable measure of coercing America."§ These are only instances.

During this time he had maintained a correspondence with Franklin, which appears in the "Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution," and all of which attests his desire for peace. In 1778 he came to Paris on a confidential errand, especially to confer with Franklin. It was on this occasion that John Adams met him and judged him severely. In 1783 he was appointed a commissioner to sign the definitive Treaty of Peace.

These things belong to history. Though perhaps not generally known, they are accessible. I have presented them partly for their intrinsic value and their prophetic character, and partly as an introduction to an unpublished letter from Hartley which I received some time ago from an English friend who has since been called away from important labors. The letter concerns *emigration to our coun-*

* Parliamentary History, Vol. XIX. pp. 259, 260.

† Ibid., p. 315.

‡ Ibid., p. 604.

§ Ibid., p. 1190.

* Parliamentary History, Vol. XVIII. p. 1356.

try and the payment of the national debt.

The following indorsement will explain its character:—

"*Note.* This is a copy of the material portion of a long letter from D. Hartley, the British Commissioner in Paris, to Lord Sydenham, January, 1785. The original was sold by C. Robinson, of 21 Bond Street, London, on the 6th April, 1859, at a sale of Hartley's MSS. and papers chiefly relating to the United States of America. It was Hartley's copy, in his own hand.

"The lot was No. 82 in the sale catalogue. It was bought by J. R. Smith, the London bookseller, for £2 6s. 0d.

"I had a copy made before the sale.

"*Joseph Parkes.*

"London, 18 July, '59."

The letter is as follows:—

"MY LORD,—In your Lordship's last letter to me, just before my leaving Paris, you are pleased to say that any information which I might have been able to collect of a nature to promote the mutual and reciprocal interests of Great Britain and the United States of America would be extremely acceptable to his Majesty's government. . . . Annexed to this letter I have the honor of transmitting to your Lordship some papers and documents which I have received from the American Ministers. One of them (No. 5) is a Map of the Continent of North America, in which the land ceded to them by the late treaty of peace is divided, by parallels of latitude and longitude, into fourteen new States. The whole project, in its full extent, would take many years in its execution, and therefore it must be far beyond the present race of men to say, 'This shall be so.' Nevertheless, *those who have the first care of this New World will probably give it such directions and inherent influences as may guide and control its course and revolutions for ages to come.* But these plans, being beyond the reach of man to predetermine, are likewise beyond the reach of comment or speculation to say what

may or may not be possible, or to predict what events may hereafter be produced by time, climates, soils, adjoining nations, or by the unwieldy magnitude of empire, and *the future population of millions superadded to millions.* The sources of the Mississippi may be unknown. The lines of longitude and latitude may be extended into unexplored regions, and the plan of this new creation may be sketched out by a presumptuous compass, if all its intermediate uses and functions were to be suspended until the final and precise accomplishment, without failure or deviation, of this unbounded plan. But this is not the case; the immediate objects in view are limited and precise; they are of prudent thought, and within the scope of human power to measure out and to execute. The principle indeed is indefinite, and will be left to the test of future ages to determine its duration or extent. I take the liberty to suggest thus much, lest we should be led away to suppose that the councils which have produced these plans have had no wiser or more sedate views than merely the amusement of drawing meridians of ambition and high thoughts. There appear to me to be two solid and rational objects in view: the first is, by the sale of lands nearly contiguous to the present States (receiving Congress paper in payment according to its scale of depreciation) *to extinguish the present national debt*, which I understand might be discharged for about twelve millions sterling.

"If your Lordship will cast your eye upon the map to the south and east of the Ohio and the Mississippi, you will see many millions of acres, which, valued at a single dollar per acre, would discharge many millions sterling. The whole space within the boundaries lately conceded to the United States, together with the unoccupied lands eastward of the great rivers, may perhaps contain near half a million of square miles (in acres, perhaps three hundred millions, more or less). A sixth part of this, the nearest parts

being likewise the most valuable, would discharge the whole of their national debt. It is a new proposition to be offered to the numerous common rank of mankind in all the countries of the world, to say that there are in America fertile soils and temperate climates in which an acre of land may be purchased for a trifling consideration, which may be possessed in freedom, together with all the natural and civil rights of mankind. The Congress have already proclaimed this, and that no other qualification or name is necessary but to become settlers, without distinction of countries or persons. The European peasant, who toils for his scanty sustenance in penury, wretchedness, and servitude, will eagerly fly to this asylum for free and industrious labor. The tide of immigration may set strongly outward from Scotland, Ireland, and Canada to this new land of promise. A very great proportion of men in all the countries of the world are without property, and generally are subject to governments of which they have no participation, and over whom they have no control. The Congress have now opened to all the world a sale of landed settlements where the liberty and property of each individual is to be consigned to his own custody and defence. The first settlers, as the seedlings of a new State, will be under a temporary government of their own choice, provided it be similar to some one of the present American governments. But as soon as their numbers shall amount to twenty thousand, their temporary government is to cease, and they are to establish a permanent government for themselves, and whenever such new State shall have of free inhabitants as many as shall be in any one the least numerous of the original States. These are such propositions of free establishments as have never yet been offered to mankind, and cannot fail of producing great effects in the future progress of things. The Congress have arranged their offers in the most inviting and artful terms, and lest individual peasants and laborers

should not have the means of removing themselves, they throw out inducements to moneyed adventurers to purchase and to undertake the settlement by commission and agency, without personal residence, by stipulating that the lands of proprietors being absentees shall not be higher taxed than the lands of residents. This will quicken the sale of lands, which is their object. For the explanation of these points, I beg leave to refer your Lordship to the documents annexed, Nos. 5 and 6, namely, the Map and Resolutions of Congress, dated April, 1784. There is another circumstance would confirm that it is the intention of Congress to invite moneyed adventurers to make purchases and settlements, which is the precise and mathematical mode of dividing and marking out for sale the lands in each new proposed State. These new States are to be divided by parallel lines running north and south, and by other parallels running east and west. They are to be divided into hundreds of ten geographical miles square, and then again into lots of one square mile. The divisions are laid out as regularly as the squares upon a chessboard, and all to be formed into a Charter of Compact.

"They may be purchased by purchasers at any distance, and the titles may be verified by registers of such or such numbers, north or south, east or west; all this is explained by the document annexed, No. 7, viz. *The Ordinance for ascertaining the mode of locating and disposing of lands in the Western Territory. This is their plan and means for paying off their national debt, and they seem very intent upon doing it.* I should observe that their debt consists of two parts, namely, domestic and foreign. The sale of lands is to be appropriated to the former.

"The domestic debt may perhaps be nine or ten millions, and the foreign debt two or three. For payment of the foreign debt it is proposed to lay a tax of five per cent upon all imports until discharged, which, I am informed, has already been agreed to by most

of the States, and probably will soon be confirmed by the rest. Upon the whole, it appears that this plan is as prudently conceived and as judiciously arranged, as to the end proposed, as any experienced cabinet of European ministers could have devised or planned any similar project. The second point which appears to me to be deserving of attention, respecting the immense cession of territory to the United States at the late peace, is a point *which will perhaps in a few years become an unparalleled phenomenon in the political world.* As soon as the national debt of the United States shall be discharged by the sale of one portion of those lands, we shall then see the Confederate Republic in a new character, as a proprietor of lands, either for sale or to let upon rents, while other nations may be struggling under debts too enormous to be discharged either by economy or taxation, and while they may be laboring to raise ordinary and necessary supplies by burdensome impositions upon their own persons and properties. *Here will be a nation possessed of a new and unheard of financial organ of stupendous magnitude, and in process of time of unmeasured value, thrown into their lap as a fortuitous superfluity, and almost without being sought for.*

"When such an organ of revenue begins to arise into produce and exertion, what public uses it may be applicable to, or to what abuses and perversions it might be rendered subservient, is far beyond the reach of probable discussion now. Such discussions would only be visionary speculations. However, thus far it is obvious and highly deserving of our attention, that it cannot fail becoming to the American States a most important instrument of national power, the progress and operation of which must hereafter be *a most interesting object of attention to the British American dominions which are in close vicinity to the territories of the United States, and I should hope that these considerations would lead us, inasmuch as we*

value those parts of our dominions, to encourage conciliatory and amicable correspondence between them and their neighbors.

"I have thus, my Lord, endeavored to comply with your Lordship's commands to the best of my power, in stating such information to his Majesty's government as I have been enabled to collect of such nature as may tend to the mutual and reciprocal interest of Great Britain and the United States of America. I do not recollect at present anything further to trouble your Lordship with. If any of the foregoing points should require any further elucidation, I shall always be ready to obey your Lordship's summons, or to give in any other way the best explanations in my power."

COUNT D'ARANDA. — 1783.

THE Count d'Aranda was one of the first of Spanish statesmen and diplomatists, and one of the richest subjects of Spain in his day; born at Saragossa, 1718, and died 1799. He, too, is one of our prophets. Originally a soldier, he became ambassador, governor of a province, and prime minister. In the latter post he displayed character as well as ability, and was the benefactor of his country. He drove the Jesuits from Spain and dared to oppose the Inquisition. He was a philosopher, and, like Pope Benedict XIV., corresponded with Voltaire. Such a liberal spirit was out of place in Spain. Compelled to resign in 1773, he found a retreat at Paris as ambassador, where he came into communication with Franklin, Adams, and Jay, and finally signed the Treaty of Paris, by which Spain acknowledged our independence. Shortly afterwards he returned to Spain and took the place of Florida Blanca as prime minister.

Franklin, on meeting him, records, in his letter to the secret committee of Congress, that he seemed "well disposed to us."* Shortly afterwards he

* Franklin, Works, Vol. VIII. p. 194.

had another interview with him, which he thus chronicles in his journal:—

"*Saturday, June 29th* [1782].—We went together to the Spanish Ambassador's, who received us with great civility and politeness. He spoke with Mr. Jay on the subject of the treaty they were to make together. . . . On our going out, he took pains himself to open the folding-doors for us, which is a high compliment here, and told us he would return our visit (*rendre son devoir*), and then fix a day with us for dining with him."*

Adams, in his journal, describes a Sunday dinner at his house, then a "new building in the finest situation of Paris,"† being a part of the incomparable palace, with its columnar front, which is still admired as it looks on the Place de la Concorde. Jay also describes a dinner with the Count, who was "living in great splendor, with an assortment of wines the finest in Europe," and was "the ablest Spaniard he had ever known"; showing by his conversation "that his court is in earnest," and appearing "frank and candid, as well as sagacious."‡ These hospitalities have a peculiar interest, when it is known, as it now is, that Count d'Aranda regarded the acknowledgment of our independence with "grief and dread." But these sentiments were disguised from our ministers.

After signing the Treaty of Paris, by which Spain acknowledged our independence, D'Aranda addressed a memoir secretly to King Charles III., in which his opinions on this event are set forth. This prophetic document slumbered for a long time in the confidential archives of the Spanish crown. Coxe, in his "Memoirs of the House of Bourbon in Spain," which are founded on a rare collection of original documents, makes no allusion to it. The memoir appears for the first time in a volume published at Paris in 1837, and entitled *Gouvernement de Charles III.*,

Roi d'Espagne, ou Instruction réservée à la Junte d'État par ce Monarque. Publiée par D. André Muriel. The editor had already translated into French the Memoirs of Coxe, and was probably led by this labor to make the supplementary collection. An abstract of the memoir of D'Aranda appears in one of the historical dissertations of the Mexican authority, Alaman, who said of it that it has "a just celebrity, because results have made it pass for a prophecy."* I translate it now from the French of Muriel.

"*Memoir communicated secretly to the King by his Excellency the Count d'Aranda, on the Independence of the English Colonies, after having signed the Treaty of Paris of 1783.*"

"The independence of the English colonies has been acknowledged. This is for me an occasion of grief and dread. France has few possessions in America; but she should have considered that Spain, her intimate ally, has many, and that she is left to-day exposed to terrible shocks. From the beginning, France has acted contrary to her true interests in encouraging and seconding this independence; I have so declared often to the ministers of this nation. What could happen better for France than to see the English and the colonists destroy each other in a party warfare which could only augment her power and favor her interests? The antipathy which reigns between France and England blinded the French Cabinet; it forgot that its interest consisted in remaining a tranquil spectator of this conflict; and, once launched in the arena, it dragged us unhappily, and by virtue of the family compact, into a war entirely contrary to our proper interest.

"I will not stop here to examine the opinions of some statesmen, our own countrymen as well as foreigners, which I share, on the difficulty of preserving our power in America. Never have so extensive possessions, placed at a great

* Franklin, Works, Vol. IX. p. 350.

† John Adams, Works, Vol. III. p. 379.

‡ Jay, Life of John Jay, Vol. I. p. 140; Vol. II. p. 101.

* Alaman, *Disertaciones sobre la Historia de la República Mexicana*, Tomo III. pp. 351, 352.

distance from the metropolis, been long preserved. To this cause, applicable to all colonies, must be added others peculiar to the Spanish possessions; namely, the difficulty of succoring them in case of need; the vexations to which the unhappy inhabitants have been exposed from some of the governors; the distance of the supreme authority to which they must have recourse for the redress of grievances, which causes years to pass before justice is done to their complaints; the vengeance of the local authorities to which they continue exposed while waiting; the difficulty of knowing the truth at so great a distance; finally, the means which the viceroys and governors, from being Spaniards, cannot fail to have for obtaining favorable judgments in Spain; all these different circumstances will render the inhabitants of America discontented, and make them attempt efforts to obtain independence as soon as they shall have a propitious occasion.

"Without entering into any of these considerations, I shall confine myself now to that which occupies us from the dread of seeing ourselves exposed to dangers from the new power which we have just recognized in a country where there is no other in condition to arrest its progress. *This Federal Republic is born a pygmy*, so to speak. It required the support and the forces of two powers as great as Spain and France in order to attain independence. *A day will come when it will be a giant, even a colossus formidable in these countries.* It will then forget the benefits which it has received from the two powers, and will dream of nothing but to organize itself. *Liberty of conscience, the facility for establishing a new population on immense lands, as well as the advantages of the new government, will draw thither agriculturists and artisans from all the nations; for men always run after fortune. And in a few years we shall see with true grief the tyrannical existence of this same colossus of which I speak.*

"The first movement of this power,

when it has arrived at its aggrandizement, will be to obtain possession of the Floridas, in order to dominate the Gulf of Mexico. After having rendered commerce with New Spain difficult for us, it will aspire to the conquest of this vast empire, which it will not be possible for us to defend against a formidable power established on the same continent, and in its neighborhood. These fears are well founded, Sire; they will be changed into reality in a few years, if, indeed, there are not other disorders in our Americas still more fatal. This observation is justified by what has happened in all ages, and with all nations which have begun to rise. Man is the same everywhere; the difference of climate does not change the nature of our sentiments; he who finds the opportunity of acquiring power and of aggrandizing himself, profits by it always. How then can we expect the Americans to respect the kingdom of New Spain, when they shall have the facility of possessing themselves of this rich and beautiful country? A wise policy counsels us to take precautions against evils which may happen. This thought has occupied my whole mind, since, as Minister Plenipotentiary of your Majesty, and conformably to your royal will and instructions, I signed the Peace of Paris. I have considered this important affair with all the attention of which I am capable, and after much reflection drawn from the knowledge, military as well as political, which I have been able to acquire in my long career, I think that, in order to escape the great losses with which we are threatened, there remains nothing but the means which I am about to have the honor of exhibiting to your Majesty.

"Your Majesty must relieve yourself of all your possessions on the continent of the two Americas, *preserving only the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico* in the northern part, and some other convenient one in the southern part, to serve as a seaport or trading-place for Spanish commerce.

"In order to accomplish this great

thought in a manner becoming to Spain, three infantas must be placed in America, — one as king of Mexico, another as king of Peru, and the third as king of the Terra Firma. Your Majesty will take the title of Emperor."

I have sometimes heard this remarkable memoir called apocryphal, but without reason, except because its foresight is so remarkable. The Mexican historian Alaman treats it as genuine, and, after praising it, informs us that the proposition of Count d'Aranda to the king was not taken into consideration, which, according to him, was "disastrous to all, and especially to the people of America, who in this way would have obtained independence without struggle or anarchy." * Meanwhile all the American possessions of the Spanish crown, except Cuba and Porto Rico, have become independent, as predicted, and the new power, known as the United States, which at that time was a "pygmy," has become a "colossus."

D'Aranda was not alone in surprise at the course of Spain. The English traveller Burnaby, in his edition of 1796, mentions this as one of the reasons for the success of the colonists, and declares that he had not supposed, originally, "that Spain would join in a plan inevitably leading by slow and imperceptible steps to the final loss of all her rich possessions in America." † This was not an uncommon idea. One of John Adams's Dutch correspondents, under date of 14th September, 1780, writes he has heard it said twenty times, that, "if America becomes free, it will some day give the law to Europe; it will seize our islands and our colonies of Guiana; it will seize all the West Indies; it will swallow Mexico, even Peru, Chili, and Brazil; it will take from us our freighting commerce; it will pay its benefactors with ingratitude." ‡ Mr. Adams also records in his diary, un-

der date of 14th December, 1779, on his landing at Ferrol in Spain, that, according to the report of various persons, "the Spanish nation in general have been of opinion that the Revolution in America was of bad example to the Spanish colonies, and dangerous to the interests of Spain, as the United States, should they become ambitious, and be seized with the spirit of conquest, might aim at Mexico and Peru." * All this is entirely in harmony with the memoir of the Count d'Aranda.

BURNS. — 1788.

FROM Count d'Aranda to Robert Burns, — from the rich and titled minister, faring sumptuously in the best house of Paris, to the poor ploughboy poet, struggling in a cottage, — what a contrast! Of the poet I shall say nothing, except that he was born 25th January, 1759, and died 21st July, 1796, in the thirty-seventh year of his age.

There is only a slender thread of Burns to be woven into this web, and yet, coming from him, it must not be neglected. In a letter dated 8th November, 1788, after saying a friendly word for the unfortunate house of Stuart, he thus prophetically alludes to our independence: —

"I will not, I cannot, enter into the merits of the cause, but I dare say the American Congress, in 1776, will be allowed to be as able and as enlightened as the English Convention was in 1688; and that their posterity will celebrate the centenary of their deliverance from us, as duly and sincerely as we do ours from the oppressive measures of the house of Stuart." †

The year 1788, when these words were written, was a year of commemoration, being the hundredth from the famous revolution by which the Stuarts were excluded from the throne of England. The "centenary" of our independence is not yet completed; but long ago the commemoration began.

* Alaman, *Disertaciones*, Tomo III. p. 333.

† Burnaby, *Travels in North America*, Preface, p. 10.

‡ John Adams, *Works*, Vol. VII. p. 254.

* John Adams, *Works*, Vol. III. p. 234.

† Currie, *Life and Works of Burns*, p. 266; Graham, *History of United States*, Vol. IV. p. 462.

On the coming of that hundredth anniversary, the prophecy of Burns will be more than fulfilled.

FOX.—1794.

IN quoting from Charles James Fox, the statesman, minister, and orator, I need add nothing, except that he was born 24th January, 1749, and died 13th September, 1806, and that he was an early friend of our country.

Many words of his, especially during our Revolution, might be introduced here; but I content myself with a single passage of a later date, which, besides its expression of good-will, is a prophecy of our power. It will be found in a speech on his motion for putting an end to war with France in the House of Commons, 30th May, 1794.

"It was impossible to dissemble that we had a serious dispute with America, and although we might be confident that the wisest and best man of his age, who presided in the government of that country, would do everything that became him to avert a war, it was impossible to foresee the issue. America had no fleet, no army; but in case of war she would find various means to harass and annoy us. Against her we could not strike a blow that would not be as severely felt in London as in America, so identified were the two countries by commercial intercourse. *To a contest with such an adversary he looked as the greatest possible misfortune.* If we commenced another crusade against her, we might destroy her trade, and check the progress of her agriculture, but we must also equally injure ourselves. Desperate, therefore, indeed, must be that war in which each wound inflicted on our enemy would at the same time inflict one upon ourselves. He hoped to God that such an event as a war with America would not happen."*

All good men on both sides of the ocean must join with Fox, who thus early deprecated a war between the United States and England, and por-

trayed the consequences. Time, which has enlarged and multiplied the relations between the two countries, makes his words more applicable now than when he first uttered them.

GEORGE CANNING.—1826.

GEORGE CANNING was a successor of Fox, in the House of Commons, as statesman, minister, and orator; he was born 11th April, 1770, and died 8th August, 1827, in the beautiful villa of the Duke of Devonshire, at Chiswick, where Fox had died before. Unlike Fox in sentiment for our country, he is nevertheless associated with a leading event of our history, and is the author of prophetic words.

The Monroe Doctrine, as it is now familiarly called, proceeded from Canning. He was its inventor, promoter, and champion, at least so far as it bears against European intervention in American affairs. Earnestly engaged in counteracting the designs of the Holy Alliance for the restoration of the Spanish colonies to Spain, he sought to enlist the United States in the same policy, and when Mr. Rush, who was at the time our Minister at London, replied that any interference with European politics was contrary to the traditions of our government, he argued that, however just such a policy might have been formerly, it was no longer applicable,—that the question was new and complicated,—that it was "full as much American as European, to say no more,"—that it concerned the United States under aspects and interests as immediate and commanding as those of any of the states of Europe,—that "they were the first power on that continent, and confessedly the leading power"; and he then asked, "Was it possible that they could see with indifference their fate decided upon by Europe? Had not a new epoch arrived in the relative position of the United States toward Europe, which Europe must acknowledge? *Were the great political and commercial interests which hung upon the destinies of the*

* Parliamentary History, Vol. XXXI. p. 627.

new continent to be canvassed and adjusted in this hemisphere, without the co-operation, or even the knowledge, of the United States?" With mingled ardor and importunity the British Minister pressed his case. At last, after much discussion in the Cabinet at Washington, President Monroe, accepting the lead of Mr. Canning, put forth his famous declaration, where, after referring to the radical difference between the political systems of Europe and America, he says, that "we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their systems to any portion of this hemisphere as *dangerous to our peace and safety*," and that, where governments have been recognized by us as independent, "we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power, in any other light than as a *manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States*."*

The message of President Monroe was received in England with enthusiastic congratulations. It was upon all tongues; the press was full of it; the securities of Spanish America rose in the market; the agents of Spanish America were happy;† Brougham exclaimed, in Parliament, that "no event had ever dispersed greater joy, exultation, and gratitude over all the freemen of Europe." Mackintosh rejoiced in the coincidence of England and the United States, "the two great commonwealths, for so he delighted to call them; and he heartily prayed that they may be forever united in the cause of justice and liberty."‡ The Holy Alliance abandoned their purposes on this continent, and the independence of the Spanish colonies in America was established. Some time afterwards, on the occasion of assistance to Portugal, when Mr. Canning felt called to review and

vindicate his foreign policy, he assumed the following lofty strain. This was in the House of Commons, 12th December, 1826:—

"It would be disingenuous not to admit that the entry of the French army into Spain was, in a certain sense, a disparagement,—an affront to our pride,—a blow to the feelings of England. But I deny that, questionable or censurable as the act may be, it was one that necessarily called for our direct and hostile opposition. Was nothing then to be done? If France occupied Spain, was it necessary, in order to avoid the consequences of that occupation, that we should blockade Cadiz? No. I looked another way. I sought materials for compensation in another hemisphere. Contemplating Spain, such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that, if France had Spain, it should not be Spain 'with the Indies.' I called the *New World into existence to resist the balance of the Old*."*

The republics of Spanish America, thus called into independent existence, were to redress the balance of the Old World. If they have not contributed the weight thus vaunted, the growing power of the United States is ample to compensate any deficiencies on this continent. There is no balance of power which it cannot redress, if occasion requires.

RICHARD COBDEN. — 1849.

COMING to our own day, we meet a familiar name, now consecrated by death,—Richard Cobden; born 3d June, 1804, and died 2d April, 1865. In proportion as truth prevails among men, his character will shine with increasing glory until he is recognized as the first Englishman of his time. Though thoroughly English, he was not insular, and he served mankind as well as England.

His masterly faculties and his real goodness made him a prophet always. He saw the future, and strove to hasten

* Annual Message to Congress of 2d December, 1823.

† Rush. Memoranda of Residence at London, Vol. II. p. 453; Wheaton, Elements of International Law, pp. 97-112, Dana's note.

‡ Stapleton, Life of Canning, Vol. II. pp. 46, 47.

* Canning, Speeches, Vol. VI. pp. 108, 109.

its promises. The elevation and happiness of the human family were his daily thought. He knew how to build as well as to destroy. Through him disabilities upon trade and oppressive taxes were overturned; also a new treaty was negotiated with France, quickening commerce and intercourse. He was never so truly eminent as when bringing his practical sense and enlarged experience to commend the cause of Permanent Peace in the world by the establishment of a refined system of International Justice, and the disarming of the nations. To this great consummation all his later labors tended. I have before me a long letter, dated at *London, 7th November, 1849*, where he says much on this absorbing question, from which, by an easy transition, he passes to speak of the proposed annexation of Canada to the United States. As what he says on the latter topic concerns America, and is a prophetic voice, I have obtained permission to copy it for this collection.

"Race, religion, language, traditions, are becoming bonds of union, and not the parchment title-deeds of sovereigns. These instincts may be thwarted for the day, but they are too deeply rooted in nature and in usefulness not to prevail in the end. I look with less interest to these struggles of races to live apart for what they want to undo, than for what they will prevent being done in future. *They will warn rulers that henceforth the acquisition of fresh territory, by force of arms, will only bring embarrassments and civil war*, instead of that increased strength which, in ancient times, when people were passed, like flocks of sheep, from one king to another, always accompanied the incorporation of new territorial conquests.

"This is the secret of the admitted doctrine, that we shall have no more wars of conquest or ambition. In this respect *you* are differently situated, having vast tracts of unpeopled territory to tempt that cupidity which, in respect of landed property, always disposes individuals and nations, however rich in acres, to desire more. This brings

me to the subject of Canada, to which you refer in your letters.

"I agree with you, that *nature has decided that Canada and the United States must become one, for all purposes of free intercommunication*. Whether they also shall be united in the same federal government must depend upon the two parties to the union. I can assure you that there will be no repetition of the policy of 1776. on our part, to prevent our North American colonies from pursuing their interest in their own way. If the people of Canada are tolerably unanimous in wishing to sever the very slight thread which now binds them to this country, I see no reason why, if good faith and ordinary temper be observed, it should not be done amicably. I think it would be far more likely to be accomplished peaceably; *if the subject of annexation were left as a distinct question*. I am quite sure that *we* should be gainers, to the amount of about a million sterling annually, if our North American colonists would set up in life for themselves and maintain their own establishments, and I see no reason to doubt that they might be also gainers by being thrown upon their own resources.

"The less your countrymen mingle in the controversy, the better. It will only be an additional obstacle in the path of those in this country who see the ultimate necessity of a separation, but who have still some ignorance and prejudice to contend against, which, if used as political capital by designing politicians, may complicate seriously a very difficult piece of statesmanship. It is for you and such as you, who love peace, to guide your countrymen aright in this matter. You have made the most noble contributions of any modern writer to the cause of peace; and as a public man I hope you will exert all your influence to induce Americans to hold a dignified attitude and observe a 'masterly inactivity' in the controversy which is rapidly advancing to a solution between the mother country and her American colonies."

A prudent patriotism among us will

appreciate the wisdom of this counsel, which is more needed now than when it was written. The controversy which Cobden foresaw "between the mother country and her American colonies" is yet undetermined. The recent creation of what is somewhat grandly called "The Dominion of Canada" marks one stage in its progress.

LUCAS ALAMAN.—1852.

FROM Canada I pass to Mexico, and close this list with Lucas Alaman, the Mexican statesman and historian, who has left on record a most pathetic prophecy with regard to his own country, intensely interesting to us at this moment.

Little can be gathered here with regard to this remarkable character. His name does not appear in any biographical or bibliographical dictionary,—not in the late editions of Michaud or Brunet,—although his public life and his literary labors might claim for him a place in biography and bibliography. From the title-page of one of his volumes it appears that, besides being a member of the Mexican Society of Geography and Statistics, and also of the Fine Arts, he was a corresponding member of several foreign societies, among which were the Royal Academy of History at Madrid, the Royal Institute of Sciences in Bavaria, the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, and the Massachusetts Historical Society. It is only in the dearth of authentic information with regard to him that I mention these circumstances. It does not appear when he died. The Preface to the last volume of his History is dated 18th November, 1852; and, as his name is not noticed in Mexican affairs since then, it is not unreasonable to suppose that he died shortly after this date, although his death first appears in the Transactions of the Massachusetts Historical Society for 1861.

Alaman figured in the Mexican Cortes, and also as Minister of Foreign Affairs, especially under President

Bustamente. In the latter capacity he inspired the respect of foreign diplomatists. One of these, who had occasion to know him officially, says of him, in answer to my inquiries, that he "was the greatest statesman which Mexico has produced since her independence." His portrait, as engraved in one of his volumes, resembles the late Mr. Clayton of Delaware. He was one of the few persons in any country who have been able to unite literature with public life, and obtain honors in each department.

His first work was "Dissertations on the History of the Mexican Republic," *Disertaciones sobre la Historia de la Republica Mexicana*, in three volumes, published at Mexico, 1844. In these he considers the original conquest by Cortez; its consequences; the conqueror and his family; the propagation of the Christian religion in New Spain; the formation of the city of Mexico; the history of Spain and the house of Bourbon. All these topics are treated somewhat copiously. Then followed the "History of Mexico, from the First Movements which prepared its Independence in 1808, to the present Epoch," (*Historia de Mejico desde los primeros Movimientos que prepararon á su Independencia en el Año de 1808 hasta la Época presente*), in five volumes, published at Mexico, the first bearing date 1849, and the fifth 1852. From the Preface to the first volume, it appears that the author was born in Guanajuato, and witnessed there the beginning of the Mexican revolution in 1810, under Don Miguel Hidalgo, the curate of Dolores; that he was personally acquainted with the curate and with many of those who had a principal part in the successes of that time; that he was experienced in public affairs, as deputy and as member of the cabinet; and that he had known directly the persons and things of which he wrote. His last volume embraces the government of Iturbide as Emperor, and also his unfortunate death, ending with the establishment of the Mexican Federal Republic in 1824. The

work is careful and well considered. The eminent diplomatist already mentioned, who had known the author officially, writes that "no one was better acquainted with the history and causes of the incessant revolutions in his unfortunate country, and that his work on this subject is considered by all respectable men in Mexico a *chef-d'œuvre* for purity of sentiments and patriotic convictions."

It is on account of the valedictory words of this History that I have introduced the name of Alaman on this occasion. They are as follows:—

"Mexico will be, without doubt, a land of prosperity from its natural advantages, *but it will not be so for the races which now inhabit it.* As it seemed the destiny of the peoples who established themselves therein at different and remote epochs to perish from the face of it, leaving hardly a memory of their existence; even as the nation which built the edifices of Palenque, and those which we admire in the peninsula of Yucatan, was destroyed without its being known what it was nor how it disappeared; *even as the Toltecs perished by the hands of barbarous tribes coming from the North,* no record of them remaining but the pyramids of Cholulu and Teotihuacan; and, finally, even as the ancient Mexicans fell beneath the power of the Spaniards, *the country gaining infinitely by this change of dominion, but its ancient masters being overthrown;*—so likewise its present inhabitants shall be ruined and hardly obtain the compassion they have merited, and the Mexican nation of our days shall have applied to it what a celebrated Latin poet said of one of the most famous personages of Roman history, STAT MAGNI NOMINIS UMBRA,*—nothing more remains than the shadow of a name illustrious in another time.

"May the Almighty, in whose hands is the fate of nations, and who by ways hidden from our sight abases or exalts

them, according to the designs of his providence, be pleased to grant unto ours the protection by which he has so often deigned to preserve it from the dangers to which it has been exposed."*

Most affecting words of prophecy! Considering the character of the author as statesman and historian, it could have been only with inconceivable anguish that he made this terrible record with regard to the land whose child and servant he was. Born and reared in Mexico, honored by its important trusts, and writing the history of its independence, it was his country, having for him all that makes a country dear; and yet thus calmly he consigns the present people to oblivion, while another enters into those happy places where nature is so bountiful. Thus does a Mexican leave the door open to the foreigner.

CONCLUSION.

SUCH are some of the prophetic voices about America, differing in character and importance, but all having one augury, and opening one vista, illimitable in extent and vastness. Farewell to the idea of Montesquieu, that a republic can exist only in a small territory.

Ancient prophecy foretold another world beyond the ocean, which in the mind of Christopher Columbus was nothing less than the Orient with its inexhaustible treasures. Then came the succession of prophets, who discerned the future of this continent, beginning with that rare genius, Sir Thomas Browne, who, in the reign of Charles II., while the settlements were in their infancy, predicted their growth in power and civilization; and then that rarest character, Bishop Berkeley, who, in the reign of George I., while the settlements were still feeble and undeveloped, heralded a Western empire as "Time's noblest offspring."

These voices are general. Others

* In the original text of Alaman this is printed in large capitals, and it is explained in a note as said by Lucan in his *Pharsalia*, with regard to Pompey.

* Alaman, *Historia*, Tomo V. pp. 954, 955.

more precise followed. Turgot, the philosopher and minister, saw in youth, with the vision of genius, that all colonies must at their maturity drop from the parent stem, like ripe fruit. John Adams, one of the chiefs of our own history, in a youth illumined as that of Turgot, saw the predominance of the Colonies in population and power followed by the transfer of empire to America; then the glory of Independence and its joyous celebration by grateful generations; then the triumph of our language; and, finally, the establishment of our republican institutions over all North America. Then came the Abbé Galiani, the Neapolitan Frenchman, who, writing from Naples while our struggle was still undecided, gayly predicts the total downfall of Europe, the transmigration to America, and the consummation of the greatest revolution of the globe by establishing the reign of America over Europe. There is also Adam Smith, the illustrious philosopher, who quietly carries the seat of government across the Atlantic. Meanwhile Pownall, once a Colonial Governor and then a member of Parliament, in successive works of great detail, foreshadows independence, naval supremacy, commercial prosperity, immigration from the Old World, and a new national life, destined to supersede the systems of Europe and arouse the "curses" of royal ministers. Hartley, also a member of Parliament, and the British negotiator who signed the definitive treaty of Independence, bravely announces in Parliament that the New World is before the Colonists, and that liberty is theirs; and afterwards, as diplomatist, instructs his government that, through the attraction of our public lands, immigration will be quickened beyond precedent and the national debt cease to be a burden. D'Aranda, the Spanish statesman and diplomatist, predicts to his king that the United States, though born a "pygmy," will soon be a "colossus," under whose influence Spain will lose all her American possessions except only Cuba and Porto Rico. Burns, the truthful poet,

looks forward a hundred years, and beholds our people rejoicing in the centenary of their independence. Fox, the liberal statesman, foresees the increasing might and various relations of the United States, so that a blow aimed at them must have a rebound as destructive as itself. Canning, the brilliant orator, in a much-admired flight of eloquence, discerns the New World, with its republics just called into being, redressing the balance of the old. Cobden, whose fame will be second only to that of Adam Smith among all in this catalogue, calmly predicts the separation of Canada from the mother country by peaceable means. Alaman, the Mexican statesman and historian, announces that Mexico, which has already known so many successive races, will hereafter be ruled by yet another people, who will take the place of the present possessors; and with these prophetic words, he draws a pall over his country.

All these various voices, of different times and countries, mingle and intertwine in representing the great future of our Republic, which from small beginnings has already become great. It was at first only a grain of mustard-seed, "which is, indeed, the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Better still, it was only a little leaven, but it is fast leavening the whole continent. Nearly all who have prophesied speak of "America" or "North America," and not of any limited circle, colony, or state. It was so, at the beginning, with Sir Thomas Browne, and especially with Berkeley. During our Revolution the Colonies, struggling for independence, were always described by this continental designation. They were already "America," or "North America," thus incidentally foreshadowing that coming time when the whole continent, with all its various States, shall be a Plural Unit, with one Constitution, one Liberty, and one Destiny. The theme was also taken

up by the poet, and popularized in the often quoted lines : —

"No pent-up Utica contracts your powers,
But the whole boundless continent is yours." *

Such grandeur may justly excite anxiety rather than pride, for duties are in corresponding proportion. There is occasion for humility also, as the individual considers his own insignificance in the transcendent mass. The tiny polyp, in its unconscious life, builds the everlasting coral; each citizen is little more than the industrious insect. The result is accomplished by continuous and combined exertion. Millions of citizens, working in obedience to nature, can accomplish anything. Of course, war is an instrumentality which a true civilization disowns. Here some of our prophets have erred. Sir Thomas Browne was so much overshadowed by his own age, that his vision was darkened by "great armies," and even "hostile and piratical attacks" on Europe. It was natural that D'Aranda, schooled in worldly affairs, should imagine the new-born power ready to seize the Spanish possessions. Among our own countrymen, Jefferson looked to war for the extension of dominion. The Floridas, he says on one occasion, "are ours on the first moment of war, and until a war they are of no particular necessity to us." † Happily they were acquired in another way. Then again, while declaring that no constitution

was ever before so calculated as ours for extensive empire and self-government, and insisting upon Canada as a component part, he calmly says that "this would be, of course, in the first war." * Afterwards, while confessing a longing for Cuba, "as the most interesting addition that could ever be made to our system of States," he says that "he is sensible this can never be obtained, even with her own consent, without war." † Thus at each stage is the baptism of blood. In much better mood the good Bishop recognized empire as moving gently in the pathway of light. All this is much clearer now than when he prophesied. It is easy to see that empire obtained by force is unrepugnant, and offensive to that first principle of our Union according to which all just government stands only on the consent of the governed. Our country needs no such ally as war. Its destiny is mightier than war. Through peace it will have everything. This is our talisman. Give us peace, and population will increase beyond all experience; resources of all kinds will multiply infinitely; arts will embellish the land with immortal beauty; the name of Republic will be exalted, until every neighbor, yielding to irresistible attraction, will seek a new life in becoming a part of the great whole; and the national example will be more puissant than army or navy for the conquest of the world.

* By Jonathan M. Sewall, in an epilogue to Addison's tragedy of "Cato," written in 1778 for the Bow Street Theatre, Portsmouth, N. H.

† Jefferson's Works, Vol. V. p. 444.

* Jefferson's Works, Vol. V. p. 444.

† Ibid., Vol. VII. p. 316. See also pp. 288, 299.

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